



Response to Request for Information

Reference FOI 002626
Date 09 August 2018

National Referral Mechanism

Request:

I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information.

I am asking for annual data from 2013 onwards about the number of minors referred to your authority under the National Referral Mechanism AND how many of these children have been reported missing after entering your care. If possible, please could you include their ages and nationality (although if this would be too time-consuming under the Act and would lead to my request being denied, please omit this data).

I am referring to this paragraph below – wanting to know how many child victims of modern slavery have fallen under your care after being assessed through the NRM.

Initially the competent authorities make a 'reasonable grounds' decision, which assesses whether the competent authority 'believes but cannot prove' that the person is a victim of modern slavery. If an adult individual receives a positive reasonable grounds decision they become entitled to State-funded support.³ Local authorities have responsibilities to support child victims of modern slavery under existing statutory child protection arrangements.

<http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/publications/national-referral-mechanism-statistics/2017-nrm-statistics/884-nrm-annual-report-2017/file>

Your request for information has now been considered and the City of Wolverhampton Council is not obliged to supply the information you requested for the reasons set out below.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires City of Wolverhampton Council, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) to provide you, the applicant with a notice which:

- (a) states the fact,
- (b) specifies the exemption in question and
- (c) states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies:

In relation to your particular request, the following exemption applies:

Section 12 - Exemption where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit

We can confirm that the Council holds information falling within the description specified in your request. However, Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 allows a public authority to refuse a request if the cost of providing the information to the applicant would exceed the 'appropriate limit' as defined by the Freedom of Information.

The Regulations provide that the appropriate limit to be applied to requests received by local authorities is £450 (equivalent to 18 hours of work). In estimating the cost of complying with a request for information, an authority can only take into account any reasonable costs incurred in:

- (a) Determining whether it holds the information,*
- (b) Locating the information, or a document which may contain the information,*
- (c) Retrieving the information, or a document which may contain the information,*
and
- (d) Extracting the information from a document containing it.*

For the purposes of the estimate the costs of performing these activities should be estimated at a rate of £25 per hour.

The information appertaining to your request is not easily accessible and as such this information is not held as a distinct set able to be retrieved or reported on. To get the information would require a full scale look into all individual records. This would be a manual exercise and as such we believe that the aggregated time it would take to collate the information would be in excess of 18 hours (equivalent to a notional cost of £450).